



State Senator

February 13, 2004

**VALDE GARCIA**

*Serving the 22<sup>nd</sup> District*

*Shiawassee-Livingston-southern Ingham counties*

## Coffee Break News

### **Republicans introduce next JOBS plan**

Senate and House Republicans this week unveiled the next phase of their comprehensive plan to jumpstart Michigan's stalled economy. The second phase of the legislative JOBS plan – Job Opportunities for Business Success – targets tax relief for businesses by creating new jobs and eliminating many of the barriers to entrepreneurial activities.

The JOBS II plan is a broad-ranging call to action on Michigan's job creation front. Specifically, it provides tax relief to businesses that create new jobs, eliminates taxation of federal and state research funds and cuts red-tape nightmares by creating a "bureaucracy buster team" to recommend ways to remove burdensome regulations for businesses. It also helps businesses by simplifying the filing of Michigan Single Business Tax forms and calls on the governor to create a Michigan-Ontario Border Commission to standardize border-related rules and regulations.

### **Legislature approves consumer protection for prepaid funerals**

After receiving overwhelming support in both the House and Senate, legislation to protect consumers' prepaid funeral arrangements now goes to the governor for her signature. Uneven regulations for funeral homes and cemeteries have made it possible for unscrupulous sellers to take advantage of consumers for more than 20 years. The legislation requires all sellers of prepaid funeral goods and services to place 100 percent of a consumer's money in a secure escrow account to ensure the money is available to pay for goods and services at a later date or provide a full refund, if necessary. It also ensures that purchasers of cemetery goods and services can receive a full refund.

### **E-filing**

Hoping to receive your income tax return quickly this year? Then consider e-filing. According to the Michigan Department of Treasury, more than 1.7 million Michigan taxpayers chose to e-file their 2002 income tax returns, making Michigan third in the nation for e-filing. The benefits of e-filing include: receiving your Michigan refund in about seven business days; access to filing 24 hours a day, seven days a week; a significant reduction in errors versus paper returns; and quick confirmation (within three business days) that your return was accepted for processing by the IRS and the State of Michigan. Not only is e-filing quicker and more convenient, but it's also safe and secure. All your confidential information is encrypted -- only you or your tax preparer can see your return. For more information, log on to: <http://www.michigan.gov/treasury>.

### **Michigan apples now adding to Mexican meals**

State leaders celebrated the first batch of Michigan apples heading to Mexico this week. After eight years of trying, Michigan officials have gotten the approval of the Mexican government to export the apples. State officials believe Mexico could become Michigan's largest export market for the fruit, selling up to \$6 million worth in five years. The approval process took time because apple growers had to develop a way to ensure no insects or diseases were exported to Mexico along with the fruit.

### **MIRTs legislation passes House**

Thursday the House of Representatives passed legislation outlawing the sale, purchase, possession and use of mobile traffic-signal controllers. These devices allow motorists within a 1,500-foot range to change a traffic light immediately from red to green with the push of a button. The devices were designed for use by police and fire vehicles and were never intended for use by the public. Senate Bills 842 and 843 make selling, purchasing and using these devices illegal and establish strict penalties for offenders. The bills now go to the governor for approval.